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The Cultural Heritage and Potential for Sustainable Site Development of Greater Jezreel

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The Cultural Heritage and Potential for Sustainable Site Development of Greater Jezreel

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Figure 1: Arial view of greater Jezreel looking east across the Jezreel Valley. Photo courtesy of the Jezreel Expedition

Introduction

The Jezreel Valley is a fertile plain in north central Israel. In antiquity the north-south trade route known as the Via Maris, which connected Egypt, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia, passed directly through the valley. Located on the eastern edge of the valley, the site of greater Jezreel, comprised of Tel Jezreel, and the lesser-known Tel Ein Jezreel, and their immediate surroundings are well located not only to have benefited from the traffic on this ancient highway, but also potentially to have monitored and controlled it. The site's strategic location is further highlighted by its status as the northernmost point on the ancient "Way of the Patriarchs," the regional highway connecting Israel's northern valleys to the mountain cities of central Israel. The situation of Tel Jezreel, the upper tel, on a natural stone outcrop rising approximately fifty meters above the lower tel and up to about one hundred meters above the valley floor at its highest

point,[1] means that it could have very easily and literally overseen all the traffic and trade in the valley below.

Figure 2: Regional map showing Jezreel's location in relation to major historic sites and highways[2]

[1]Jennie Ebeling, Norma Franklin, and Ian Cipin, "Jezreel Revealed in Laser Scans: A Preliminary Report of the 2012 Survey Season," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 75, no. 4 (2012): 232–33; Norma Franklin, "Roads, Artifacts, and Installations: Reconstructing the Settlement History of Jezreel in the Longue Durée" (12th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, Bologna, April 2021); David Ussishkin and John Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1990-1991: Preliminary Report," *Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University* 19, no. 1 (1992): 3.

[2]Eric Gaba, *Israel relief location map-blank,* Aug. 2011, Wikimedia Commons accessed May 4, 2021. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Israel_relief_location_map-blank.jpg. Placenames, markers, and roadway indicators were added by the author. This map is not to scale and should not be considered exact but rather a representation of Jezreel's location relative to major regional sites and thoroughfares.

Not only was Jezreel's location at the intersection of two major roadways economically strategic, but also militarily so. The commanding view of the valley which Tel Jezreel boasts makes it a perfect look out point from which to spy an enemy advance. And the Jezreel Valley or the Plain of Esdraelon, as the largest expanse of flat land in the region, was a frequent location for pitched battles throughout antiquity. Though Jezreel's military importance was never exactly forgotten, it has long been overshadowed by its biblical association. Due to its convenient location at the intersection of two major roadways and its biblical association, Jezreel has been a stopping point for pilgrims traveling across Israel for centuries. The continuous references to Jezreel in pilgrims' travelogues throughout the crusader period and into the modern day attest not only to the historic significance of the site, but also to the enduring interest in its heritage.

The earliest archaeological surveys of Jezreel were carried out by Nehemiah Zori, beginning in 1941. He was the first to document evidence of early occupation in the area of Tel Ein Jezreel, henceforth referred to as the lower tel. Among the finds that he documented were stone tools dating from the Neolithic through the Chalcolithic periods and pottery from the Early Bronze through the Hellenistic periods. Zori and the majority of the archaeologists who have studied Jezreel since have treated the upper and lower tels as two separate sites and have considered the upper tel to be the older and more important of the two, with the lower tel recognized as little more than a secondary or satellite site, when considered at all.[3]

[3] Ebeling, Franklin, and Cipin, "Jezreel Revealed in Laser Scans," 233.

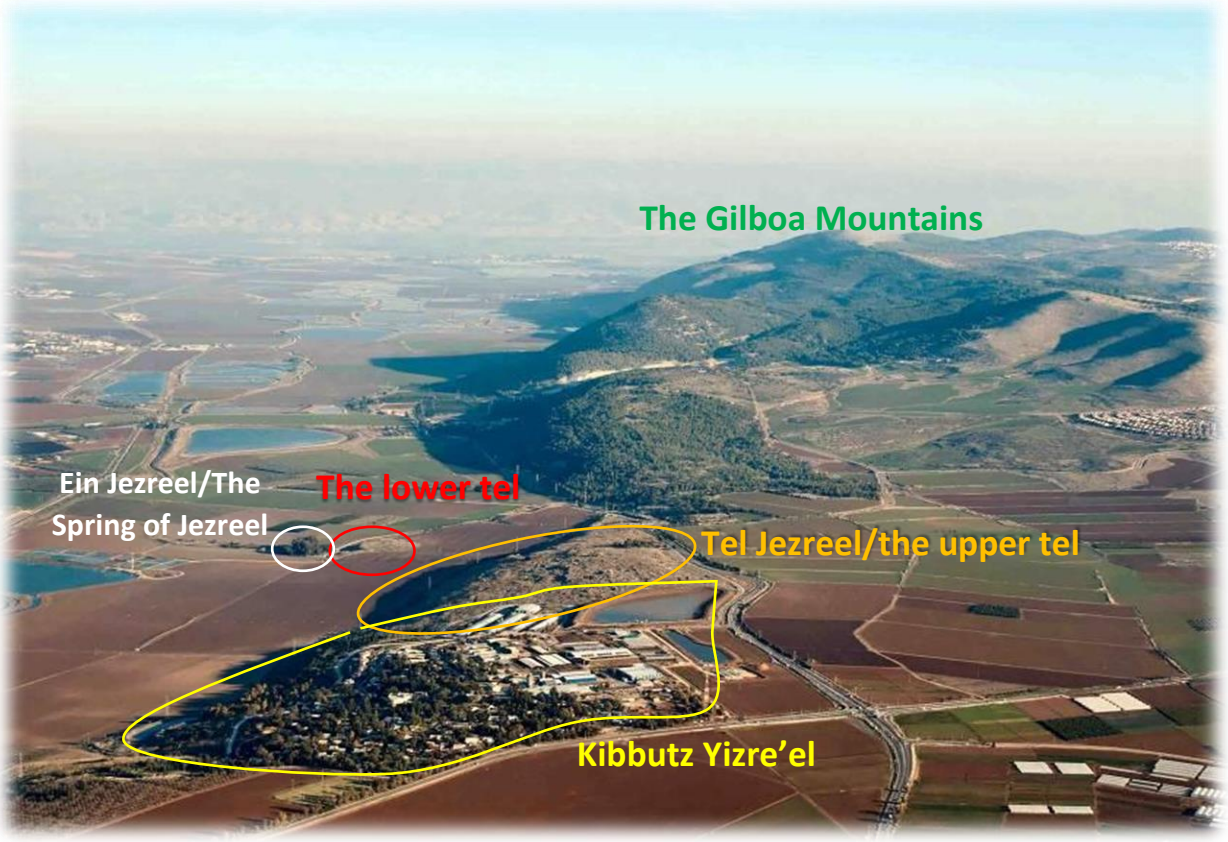

Figure 3: Aerial view of greater Jezreel with aspects of the site outlined and labeled by the author.

In 1987 and 1988 salvage excavations were undertaken by Israel's Department of Antiquities, prompted by the exposure of monumental remains while preparing a build site for a museum that later failed to be built due to lack of funding.[4] However, the first extensive program of excavation did not take place until 1990, when David Ussishkin and John Woodhead of Tel Aviv University and the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, respectively, headed the excavation focused primarily on a large enclosure located atop the upper tel.

At the time they attributed the date of the enclosure and, by extension the main occupation of the site, to the Iron Age and specifically to the time of the biblical account of

[4] Ebeling, Franklin, and Cipin, "Jezreel Revealed in Laser Scans," 232; and Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1990-1991," 9.

Ahab's reign.[5] However, that dating, based largely on the biblical narrative itself along with pottery typology, has been vigorously criticized.[6] Two main critiques being that the security of the loci from which the ceramic finds used as evidence of the dating came from was highly questionable, and that there were no other credible forms of dating used beyond the biblical narrative, the fallibility of which the excavators seemed either unwilling or incapable of even considering.[7] In fact, the excavations undertaken in the 90s seemed primarily concerned with uncovering evidence of how Tel Jezreel fit into the biblical narrative, rather than trying to understand its full position and role as a part of the extended site of greater Jezreel and within the history of the wider region. They even stated that a study of the biblical references to Jezreel was "the basis for discussion" of their 1992 preliminary report.[8]

The dating of the main complex excavated by Ussishkin and Woodhead remains uncertain and contentious. Additionally, the findings of the excavation were never fully published, making Ussishkin and Woodhead's conclusions about the site's chronology difficult to verify or challenge. However, the fact that they excavated evidence of monumental architecture which attests to the historic significance of the site is undeniable. Having done little to clarify the historic role of the upper tel within the region, the 90s excavation did however renew academic interest in the site and the relationship of the upper and lower tel.

The Jezreel Expedition, sponsored by the University of Haifa's Zinman Institute of Archaeology and the University of Evansville and co-directed by Dr. Norma Franklin and Dr. Jennie Ebeling of the respective institutions, was established to address questions which arose

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[5] Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1990-1991," 53.
[6] Amnon Ben-Tor, "Hazor and the Chronology of Northern Israel: A Reply to Israel Finkelstein," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 317 (2000): 9, 12–14.
[7] David Ussishkin, "The Credibility of the Tel Jezreel Excavations: A Rejoinder to Amnon Ben-Tor," *Tel Aviv* 27, no. 2 (2000): 255.
[8] Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1990-1991," 5.

from the findings of the excavations undertaken on the upper tel in the 90s including the nature of the relationship between the upper and lower tels and the relationship of the Iron Age remains at Jezreel to those excavated at the associated regional sites of Megiddo and Sumaria which suggested that the Iron Age chronology evidenced throughout the region did not fit well with Ussishkin and Woodhead's interpretations of the findings of their excavation.

From 2012 to 2018 the Jezreel Expedition operated an archaeological field school at greater Jezreel. One of the Expedition's primary focuses was gaining a better understanding of the relationship between the upper and lower tel sites. To this end and due to the fact that much of the upper tel has been greatly disturbed and the archaeological record contaminated in many areas, excavation was primarily focused on the lower tel. Preliminary reports and articles detailing major finds and progress by the expedition have been published frequently since 2012 and the final comprehensive excavation report is currently in the works.

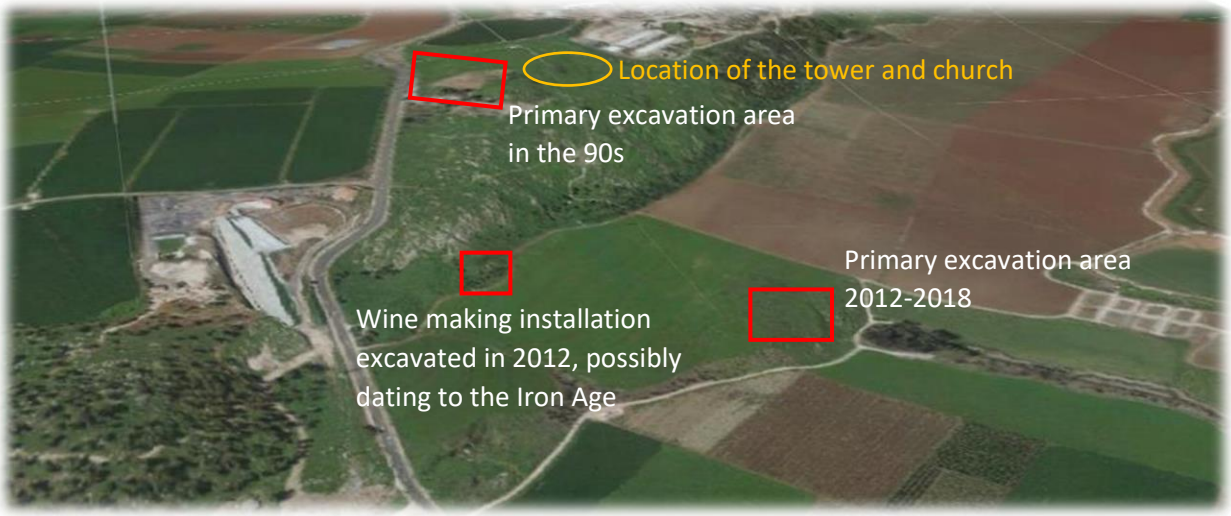

Figure 4: Aerial photo overlaying LiDAR scan of Tel Jezreel. Courtesy of the Jezreel Expedition. Outlines and text by the author.

As the archaeological data from the excavation is analyzed and prepared for full publication, members of the Jezreel Expedition's staff and independent scholars continue to work to illuminate the entirety of the site's rich and complex history. Experts are currently

analyzing the ceramic, lithic and faunal remains among other artifacts recovered by the expedition. The Jezreel Valley Regional Project is developing an interactive 3D model of Tel Jezreel.[9] In 2020 a *festschrift* in honor of Dr. Franklin was published containing several essays on the work and findings of the Jezreel Expedition.[10] The co-directors of the Expedition have been particularly relentless in promoting the significance of the site. Dr. Franklin has given presentations on the subject at numerous conferences, including the 12th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East.[11] Dr. Ebeling has also presented at conferences and incorporated the history and significance of the site into her teaching responsibilities, even leading undergraduate seminars with curricula designed around the archaeological analysis and cultural heritage of Jezreel. In the spring of this year her students designed an educational website showcasing Jezreel's history to increase the site's web presence and promote free public access to reliable information about Jezreel's historic significance (URL forthcoming).

However, despite recent efforts to understand and promote Jezreel's historic and cultural significance one key area of the site has been continuously neglected by modern scholars. At the top of the upper tel, east of the primary 90s excavation and southeast of the Jezreel Expedition's main excavation area are the ruins of a church and tower of uncertain provenance. This thesis will propose that due to its historic significance Jezreel should be developed as a heritage site. Furthermore, it will investigate the significance of the church and tower to greater Jezreel and propose that as the only standing architecture of any antiquity present, they would serve as the

[9] "3D Model of Tel Jezreel - Jezreel, Israel," American Society of Overseas Research, April 28, 2021, https://www.asor.org/resources/photo-collection/pid000628/.
[10] Jennie Ebeling and Philippe Guillaume, eds., *The Woman in the Pith Helmet: A Tribute to Archaeologist Norma Franklin* (Atlanta, GA: Lockwood Press, 2020).
[11] Franklin, "Roads, Artifacts, and Installations."

natural focal point for site development and provide recommendations for how stakeholders might proceed to initiate and invest in site development.

This thesis will propose a program of conservation and research which will facilitate further study of the site's history and the role that the tower and church played within it while simultaneously making the area safely accessible to visitors. Although the tower of Jezreel has been relatively neglected by historians and archaeologists to this point, it represents a very important aspect of the site, namely its continued occupation and importance beyond the biblical narrative for which it is best known.

Therefore, this thesis will address three primary questions related to the structure. First, it will clarify the chronology of the tower and church as much as possible using textual sources. Second it will address the deficiencies in the written record and propose that an archaeological excavation of the tower and surrounding area could greatly benefit the scholarly and general understanding of the tower's origin, evolution, roll and significance to the site of greater Jezreel and the surrounding region. This would also further emphasize the continued prosperity and importance of Jezreel through the Middle Ages and into modern times. Finally, my thesis will express why it is important for the history of the tower and church to be interpreted and communicated to the public and propose a program for converting the area surrounding these ruins into a heritage site or public park with walking trails around the structures and informational signage about the history and importance not only of these buildings but also that of the wider site.

Cultural Heritage, Public History, and Archaeological Sites in Israel

As intermediaries between academia and the general populace, public historians are in a unique position to promote historical knowledge among the community by providing professional historical interpretations and information in engaging and interesting ways. Implementing sustainable development for heritage sites, including archaeological sites, has been a widespread trend since the early 1990s. Considerations of cultural tourism have dominated the development of this trend. However, determining conservation programs to be truly sustainable is a complicated matter. Even though tourism can generate the significant income necessary for the preservation of cultural resources, it also exposes archaeological sites to risks factors that require constant monitoring and could lead to serious deterioration.[12]

Involving the local community in developing an archaeological site into a sustainable heritage resource can help ensure that the public is personally invested in monitoring and maintaining the condition of the site, ensuring that interested parties are constantly minimizing the risk and incidence of damage to the site. This process of community involvement begins with identifying the universally appealing values of the site and their presence in the field. An important part of this process requires the local community to learn about the significance and value of the place, and the necessity of preserving it for future generations. Once they have gained an understanding of the importance of the site and site preservation, individuals may begin teaching these values to others. Throughout the process, the community begins to develop a connection to the site and a sense of local pride. These feelings lead the community to take

[12] Eran Hemo and Ravit Linn, "Sustainable Conservation of Archaeological Sites with Local Communities: The Case Study of Tel Yoqne'am, Israel," *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology & Heritage Studies* 5, no. Special Issue: Public Archaeologies of the ancient Mediterranean (2017): 413.

responsibility for both the archaeological remains and the intangible values which comprise the heritage site.[13]

Providing the community with more information on the tower and church and their role within the settlement history of Jezreel will help to combat misconceptions of the site's diminished importance beyond the reign of Ahab, particularly as it was seen by western travelers in the eighteenth century, which persist to this day. Additionally, converting the area into a heritage site or park and educating the community on its historic significance will help the local population and other potential visitors to feel more connected to and invested in the site and may encourage the undertaking of additional conservation and public history programs in the area.

[13] Hemo and Linn, "Sustainable Conservation," 413.

Tel Yoqne'am: A Case Study for Heritage Site Development in Israel

In 2007 the Israel Antiquities Authority initiated a sustainable conservation and education program at the archaeological site of Tel Yoqne'am, Israel. From 2009 to 2012 the effectiveness of facilitating community involvement in the conservation and development of the site was assessed through qualitative and quantitative research. The methods and findings of the study, published by conservation specialists Erin Hemo and Ravit Linn, serve as a valuable resource for stakeholders wishing to or in the process of beginning their own cultural resource development project.

The city of Tel Yoqne'am presents a useful comparison to the potential for site development present at Tel Jezreel. Ancient Tel Yoqne'am was one of three major cities in the western Jezreel Valley, along with Megiddo and Shimron. Though the names of the cities of Megiddo and Shimron may be more commonly recognized among modern audiences, Tel Yoqne'am's history is just as rich. The city was inhabited from at least the Early Bronze Age through the Persian period but was no longer mentioned in historical sources after the Mamluk period. Excavation has revealed the presence of twenty-three distinct strata representing different periods of settlement at Tel Yoqne'am. Among these are the remains of two Iron Age fortification systems, a church and tower from the Crusader period, and other impressive features from the Early Islamic period.[14] Unfortunately, the site was left without a comprehensive management plan after the initial archaeological excavations ended. The remains were simply abandoned, unrestored and unprotected. Predictably, the site deteriorated throughout years of neglect.[15]

[14] Hemo and Linn, "Sustainable Conservation," 413.
[15] Hemo and Linn, "Sustainable Conservation," 414.

However, a sustainable conservation and educational project has since been carried out at Tel Yoqne'am. Initiated by the Israel Antiquities Authority, with the cooperation of the local community and municipality, the project included conserving the archaeological features and preparing the site for visitors by installing paths and educational signs. This process was carried out as a case study with the intent of determining whether it could serve as model for a structured process for the "sustainable conservation and management of archaeological sites within local municipalities."[16] The study identified and examined three aspects of heritage site development: conservation and sustainability, community involvement and outreach, and program evaluation.

The conservation and sustainable development program at Tel Yoqne'am began in 2007. During the initial phase of the project, the archaeological remains at the top of the site, which posed a danger to visitors, were fenced. The top of the tel became accessible to visitors, but the archaeological features remained inaccessible due to safety and demonstration concerns. The municipality, recognizing the importance of investing in the education and cultural conservation process that had just begun, designated an initial budget that permitted the exposure and conservation of the remains of the Crusader period church. The conservation program primarily included: weeding the area and stabilizing the walls in order to make the structures safe for visitors.

The program also included establishing an archaeological park at Tel Yoqne'am. The park would be operated and managed in cooperation with the local school system and serve as a learning environment and entertainment center for the children and residents of Yokneam Illit. Additionally, the program emphasized the importance of conserving and displaying local antiquities to the public, while enabling future archaeological research. The sustainability of the

[16] Hemo and Linn, "Sustainable Conservation," 414.

site's development was achieved by pursuing a course of gradual development, allocating small budgets and utilizing operational flexibility as the situation on the ground evolved.[17]

When the decision was made to open and maintain the site, it was also decided to conduct the site development as a combined archaeological excavation and didactic program, and to expose and undertake conservation procedures on the fortress wall and tower, to allow the creation of an additional explanatory station for visitors. The conservation measures included eliminating weeds, stabilizing walls, and treating their tops. These actions were taken in 2010. A generous budget allocation was provided by the local municipality the following year. This led to the decision to considerably expand the conservation work into a large archaeological complex. The affected areas included two levels of the Crusader period tower and the floor at the top of the tower. Additionally, railings and steps were installed and repaired, and extensive stabilizing features were implemented to allow visitors safe access to both the old and newly opened areas of the site. In 2012, still more conservation projects were conducted with the municipality assisting in financing the activities. This allowed the finds from the biblical period to be exposed for viewing by visitors [18]

The project was carried out with the collaboration of the community of the modern town of Yokneam Illit, which is adjacent to the archaeological site. Children and teachers from the local elementary schools participated in this project as part of the site's educational program. They learned about the history of the site and its cultural significance, used traditional techniques to make mudbricks that were used to build a "biblical wall" at the site, and designed and made personal seals which were used to decorate the signposts of the educational stations installed

[17] Hemo and Linn, "Sustainable Conservation," 414–15.
[18] Hemo and Linn, "Sustainable Conservation," 415.

throughout the site.[19] Questionnaires were annually distributed to school children in Yokneam Illit to gauge the success of the conservation programs' education and community involvement goals. The detailed findings of these surveys are explored by Hemo and Linn.[20] For the purpose of this study it will be sufficient to say that students who participated in the site's educational program demonstrated a significant increase in recognizing a personal connection to the site, likelihood of visiting the site outside of the educational program, likelihood of volunteering at the site, and recognizing the importance of conservation programs and heritage sites generally.

The project, which included carrying out conservation measures on the archaeological remains and installing paths and explanatory signs to prepare the site for visitors, was specifically intended as a case study which might serve as a model for sustainable site development in the country. The case of Tel Yoqne'am clearly demonstrates that it is possible to develop a process for the sustainable conservation of an archaeological site within a local community. Not only is this process possible, but it may also be warmly welcomed by many members of the community and provide significant benefit to the community as well as to the site itself and create a strong basis for long-term conservation activities.

The stages which organizers of the Tel Yoqne'am project used to plan and organize their program are as follows.

Stage 1: This phase requires developing an understanding of the situation on the ground. Issues presenting either problems to be resolved or opportunities for improvement which the site presents to the community must be identified.

Stage 2: This phase consists of further building the understanding of the site, its values, and importance, and assessing its physical features. According to English Heritage assessing the

[19] Hemo and Linn, "Sustainable Conservation," 415–18.
[20] Hemo and Linn, "Sustainable Conservation," 420–23.

importance of a place includes not only an evaluation of the significance of the site itself, but also identifying how the community defines its cultural heritage value, and comparison with similar sites.[21]

Stage 3: This involves drafting a formal statement of the cultural significance of the site: "an expression of its importance and final declaration of its natural and cultural value in context."[22] Such a statement could be published online, on a website devoted to the history and culture of the site specifically or the larger region or distributed with requests for support or aid to various stakeholders and interested parties who could help facilitate the conservation and development process.

Stage 4: This stage brainstorms strategies for the conservation, interpretation, and presentation of the site for visitors, and strategies for site administration and maintenance. It includes exploring alternate plans and their projected impact on the environment and cultural significance of the site.[23] This is the stage to consider the potential contradictory claims of various alternate stakeholders in the site.

Stage 5: This phase is devoted to project development. This stage includes collecting information on the factors influencing the future of the site: physical characteristics, community needs, resource availability, and requirements or restrictions of the local authority. This is the point when experts from different fields confer to prepare a master plan for the conservation and presentation of the site.[24]

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[21] English Heritage, "Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment," 2008.
[22] Hemo and Linn, "Sustainable Conservation," 412.
[23] Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites, "The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013," 2013.
[24] Robin Letellier, *Recording, Documentation and Information Management for the Conservation of Heritage Places,* 1st ed. (Routledge, 2015), 60–61.

Stage 6: This is the implementation of the final plan for the conservation, development, and management of the site. It is imperative to document any and all changes made to the site during this phase.[25]

Stage 7: This is the maintenance and monitoring of the site after conservation and development efforts. Commonly a site director is appointed to oversee and protect the place during its use as it is opened to the public. An evaluation of the project and its perceived success is performed. A permanent plan of maintenance and monitoring is instituted and any issues which occur may require returning to Stage 1 and beginning the conservation cycle again. [26]

The principles leading the development of a sustainable conservation program at Tel Yoqne'am were:

- "recognition of the local resonances of the site and highlighting of the community activities taking place there
- integration into the landscape by preserving the natural appearance of the archaeological site, and removing hazards and extraneous constructions
- trail development based on local and natural materials
- explanatory signs allowing direct and easy communication with the local community
- shading covers made of natural materials (fabrics and wood)
- taking into account guidelines of professional conservators and conservation architects, using minimal restoration, for educational and illustration purposes only)"[27]

The trend of increased annual budgeting and community participation in the site's conservation efforts strongly suggests that Tel Yoqne'am has achieved a level of sustainability

[25] Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites, "The Burra Charter"; Letellier, *Recording, Documentation and Information Management*, 61–62.
[26] Hemo and Linn, "Sustainable Conservation," 412.
[27] Hemo and Linn, "Sustainable Conservation," 418.

which may be imitated by sites of a similar character, like Jezreel. However, it must of course be remembered that while Tel Jezreel and Tel Yoqne'am share similar historic and physical characteristics, their situations are not identical. The most significant difference for the purpose of this study is that Tel Yoqne'am is within the area of the local municipality of Yokneam Illit while Jezreel lies within the jurisdiction of the Gilboa Regional Council. This means that Yoqne'am is administered on a city level and Jezreel on a regional level. Though they administer smaller physical areas, local municipalities generally have larger operating budgets than regional municipalities.[28] Hemo and Linn report that much of the funding for the development of Tel Yoqne'am was provided by the local municipality. With a smaller operating budget and larger area of responsibility, it cannot be assumed that the Gilboa Regional Council will be willing or able to fund development of Jezreel. This means that a greater amount of time and effort will need to be devoted to identifying and soliciting potential sources of funding for the development of Jezreel than was necessary in the case of Yoqne'am. Additionally, if the regional council is not the funding institution, they will need to be petitioned for permission to implement conservation and development measures. Despite these and other minor stipulations necessary to tailor the development plan to the site of Jezreel, the case study performed at Tel Yoqne'am is undeniably a valuable resource to inform the process of planning conservation and site development at Jezreel.

[28] "General Information on the Regional Governance and Budgeting of Israel Provided by Dr. Norma Franklin," April 17, 2021.

Proposed Cultural Heritage Conservation Program for Jezreel

Based on the work of the Tel Yoqne'am conservation project and analysis of the guiding principles of conservation organizations like English Heritage, Australia's ICOMOS, and the Getty Conservation Institute, I propose the following six-step process be followed for developing the site of Jezreel into a cultural heritage site and archaeological park.

1. Identify the site and/or structures to be preserved based on historic and cultural significance – why Jezreel?
2. Asses the site's physical conservation needs and interpretive educational opportunities. What is the bare minimum necessary to preserve the site and how can we go above and beyond to better serve the site and its community?
3. Identify and approach stakeholders as potential sources of funding and resources. Who does the site "belong" to? Who constitutes the sites community? Who is or may be willing and able to fund the conservation and development of the site?
4. Work with stakeholders and conservation and development experts to create a budget and action plan, including long term plans for the monitoring and maintenance of the site after the development goals are met.
5. Implement the development plan.
6. Uphold monitoring and maintenance strategy, implementing new conservation and development projects as necessary.

Phase 1: Establishing the Historic and Cultural Importance of Jezreel

Jezreel in the Bible

The earliest known textual references to Jezreel come from the Hebrew Bible. The most memorable mentions of the site are those included in the stories of King Ahab and his notorious wife Jezebel in 1 and 2 Kings. Ahab was king of Israel in the 9th century BCE. His wife, Jezebel, was a Phoenician princess. Older interpretations by biblical scholars hold that the people of Israel resented Jezebel because she refused to give up worshipping the gods of her homeland after becoming their queen.[29] While newer studies focus on her implementation of state authority independent of her husband as a transgression of gender roles which bred resentment and disdain with the writers of the biblical texts.[30] Whatever the reason for the initial vitriol, it has endured and evolved to such a degree that the name Jezebel has actually become synonymous for a scandalous or immoral woman.

Perhaps the best remembered incident of Ahab's rule is the conflict over Naboth's vineyard. Though the capital of the kingdom was Samaria, Ahab also had a palace, residence, or stronghold at Jezreel. There are debates over the proper translation and its implications but for simplicity's sake it will be referred to here as a palace. Next to this palace there was a vineyard owned by Naboth. Ahab wanted the land to use for a garden. He offered to buy the land for Naboth or to provide him with a better vineyard in trade. However, Naboth could not be convinced to part with the land as it would have been seen as dishonoring his ancestors from whom he had inherited it. Ahab was so upset that he took to his bed and could not be consoled.

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[29] 1 Kgs 16:31-33, 18:4. New International Version (NIV); J. M. Miller, "The Fall of the House of Ahab," *Vetus Testamentum* 17, no. 3 (1967): 307–9.
[30] Janet S. Everhart, "Jezebel: Framed by Eunuchs?" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (2010): 688–98.

Jezebel berated him for acting like a child rather than a king and told him that she would get the vineyard for him. She had Naboth framed for a crime and killed.[31]

Upon hearing that Naboth was dead Ahab went and took over the vineyard. When Ahab arrived, he encountered the prophet Elijah. Elijah declared that God had sworn to punish Ahab for the murder of Naboth and his other evil deeds. He prophesied that the house of Ahab would be destroyed, the dogs would lick Ahab's blood just as they had licked up the blood of Naboth and that dogs would eat Jezebel near the walls of Jezreel.[32] Sometime later, Ahab and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, allied together to attach Ramoth Gilead, to reclaim it from the king of Aram. During the battle Ahab was shot with an arrow. He bled to death. The chariot in which the king had bled out was washed in a pool where prostitutes bathed. It was there that the dogs licked up the blood of Ahab.[33]

After Ahab's death, his son Ahaziah became king. Ahaziah only ruled for two years. He fell through a window of an upper room and died of his injuries. Ahaziah had no heir so his younger brother, Joram, became king after him. Joram ruled for twelve years. He was killed in the field that had belonged to Naboth during a coup led by Jehu, the commander of his army. After Joram was killed, Jehu went to Jezreel to secure control of the kingdom by eliminating the final obstacle to him claiming power, Jezebel. When he rode through the gates and saw Jezebel looking down from an upper window, he called to her attendants to throw her down, which they did. He then trampled her with his chariot. After he had dinner, Jehu commanded that Jezebel be given a proper burial since she had been the daughter of a king. But all that could be found was

[31] 1 Kgs 21:1-14, NIV.; Norma Franklin, "Jezreel: A Military City and the Location of Jehu's Coup," TheTorah.com, 2017.; H.G.M. Williamson, "Jezreel in the Biblical Texts," *Tel Aviv* 18, no. 1 (1991): 84.
[32] 1 Kgs 21:16-23, NIV.
[33] 1 Kgs 22:3, 29-38, NIV.

her hands, feet, and skull. The rest had been eaten by dogs.[34] In order to secure his kingship, Jehu had all of Ahab's male children and relatives, anyone who might try to reclaim the throne claiming a right to it through blood, put to death. Their heads were sent to him in Jezreel, and he had them piled at the city gates, thus fulfilling Yahweh's curse against Ahab and his house.[35]

Though no direct archaeological evidence of these events has been recovered, the biblical narrative continues to fascinate people and draw them to the site to this day. In fact, Jezreel's biblical notoriety inspired many professors of religion and theology students to participate in the Jezreel Expedition in various capacities. This is not a phenomena specific to Jezreel but a common occurrence at archaeological sites with clear biblical association. Dr. Tony Cartledge, Professor of the Old Testament at Campbell University Divinity School and Jezreel Expedition alumnus, recognizes the participation of religious individuals and particularly that of divinity and religious studies students in the excavation of "religious sites" as the new age of pilgrimage.[36]

[34] 1 Kgs 22:40; 2 Kgs 1:3, 17, 3:1, 9:6-36, NIV.
[35] 2 Kgs 10:1-11, NIV.
[36] Tony W. Cartledge, "In the Land and in the Dirt: The Value of Field-School Experience for Divinity School Students," in *The Woman in the Pith Helmet: A Tribute to Archaeologist Norma Franklin*, ed. Jennie Ebeling and Philippe Guillaume (Lockwood Press, 2020), 19–23.

Roman and Byzantine Jezreel

Late Roman, Byzantine, and Umayyad remains have been found in every area of tel Jezreel excavated to date. From the results of the 90s excavation Sam Moorhead, who worked on the excavation and now servs as National Finds Advisor for Iron Age and Roman Coins at the British Museum, has determined that the settlement at Jezreel reached its greatest extent in the Byzantine period.[37] This assertion seems consistent with the Jezreel Expedition's excavation of the lower tel, which produced numerous Roman/Byzantine[38] finds and far fewer Umayyad finds. However, it should be noted that the lower tel also produced evidence of extensive activity in the Early Bronze Age, suggesting that settlement of the lower tel could predate that of the upper tel. Without clear information on the quantity and nature of evidence of Bronze Age activity present on the upper tel, it is impossible to say with certainty when the settlement was most extensive, the Bronze Age or the Roman/Byzantine period.

Nevertheless, it is evident from the archaeological remains that there was a strong Roman/Byzantine presence across greater Jezreel. Sources dated to the 4th century attest that a Roman road passed by or through the site.[39] Moorhead considers the probable path of this road and the extent of the Byzantine settlement at length. He concludes that surface finds from areas surrounding both the upper and lower tels suggest the Roman/Byzantine occupation of the site was likely more widespread than is currently understood. He also asserts that the presence of certain artifacts such as painted wall plaster and fragments of window glass indicate a distinct

[37] T.S.N. Moorhead, "The Late Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Periods at Tel Jezreel," *Tel Aviv*, no. 24 (1997): 129.
[38] Due to the inherent difficulties of distinguishing between the majority of Late Roman, Byzantine, and Early Umayyad material culture in the absence of artifacts with secure dates such as coins these periods will be considered together and referred to as Roman/Byzantine in this work.
[39] Bordeaux Pilgrim, *Itinerary from Bordeaux to Jerusalem*, trans. Aubrey Stewart (London: Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, 1887).; Eusebius of Caesarea, *Onomasticon*, Codex Vaticanus, Gr. 1456, trans. C. Umhau Wolf (The Tertullian Project, 1971).

presence of considerable Romanization and wealth among the residents of Jezreel during this period.[40] Extensive evidence of Roman/Byzantine burial activity, including the presence of various types of grave goods and several sarcophagi, supports theories of a large and prosperous Roman/Byzantine population.[41]

It is possible that the level of prosperity demonstrated by the Roman/Byzantine finds can be attributed to the local wine industry. The presence of three confirmed and potentially as many as eight Roman/Byzantine wine presses evidence wine production at Jezreel during this period. There is also evidence that olive oil processing, pigeon farming, growing and milling grains and possibly lentils, and tanning hides or dying fabrics all took place at Roman/Byzantine Jezreel. Each of these processes yielded products that could have been traded throughout the Jezreel Valley and beyond. Unfortunately, the instillations and artifacts associated with these activities have not yet been analyzed to such a degree as to indicate if they were happening on a scale consistent only with local use or for trade purposes. However, the presence of what appears to be a particularly large treading floor and fragments of Roman amphorae suggests that wine was produced at Jezreel to be exported for sale at external markets, across the Roman Empire and beyond. [42]

The presence of stamped amphorae, *terra sigillate*, and other fine wares support the assertion that the site was involved in local and transregional trade.[43] It should also be noted that a considerable quantity of Roman/Byzantine glass has been recovered at Jezreel. This may be further evidence of inter-regional trade with the sites of known glass industries like Jalame and

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[40] Moorhead, "The Late Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Periods at Tel Jezreel," 130–39.
[41] Moorhead, "The Late Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Periods at Tel Jezreel," 148–54.
[42] Moorhead, "The Late Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Periods at Tel Jezreel," 145–47.
[43] Tony Grey, "Esdraela: The Ceramic Record from a Settlement of Hellenistic and Roman Times to Late Antiquity in Palestine," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 146, no. 2 (June 2014): 132–33; Moorhead, "The Late Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Periods at Tel Jezreel," 164–65.

Bet-She'an. It is also possible that Jezreel had its own glass industry. Moorhead notes that a resident of the kibbutz informed him of the presence of abundant surface glass northwest of the church. However, the best evidence of the possible presence of glass manufacture on site recovered to date may be a single glass droplet that was found during the 1996 excavation season.[44] The theory that glass manufacture may have taken place in the immediate vicinity of the church at Jezreel is particularly interesting when considered in conjunction with Zori's apparent recording of a tessellated treading floor near the church and Moorhead's assertion that, "[the church] would have stood out on the horizon for pilgrims to see as they traveled down the road."[45] If glass items and wine were in fact being produced so near to the church, it is possible that they were being made for and marketed to pilgrims who visited the site. A more thorough investigation of the area is necessary in order to fully understand the range of activities which took place there and their importance to the site and the region.

[44] Moorhead, "The Late Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Periods at Tel Jezreel," 155.
[45] Moorhead, "The Late Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad Periods at Tel Jezreel," 148.

Jezreel as Pilgrimage and Economic Center

Historically, pilgrimage to and throughout the region of Israel has played an important role in Judeo-Christian culture. The Torah dictates that the Jewish people should make three annual pilgrimages to the temple in Jerusalem. Ideologically, each of these pilgrimages represents and commemorates a specific aspect of the Israelites' liberation from captivity in Egypt and journey through the wilderness to the "Promised Land". Many Jews living north of the Jerusalem would have followed the Way of the Patriarchs, the regional highway which began at Jezreel, to reach Jerusalem and the Holy Temple, perhaps even stopping to rest in or directly around the ancient city of Jezreel. The act of pilgrimage remains a significant aspect of Jewish culture and religious practice to this day. Devout Jews from all over the world make annual and even triannual trips to Jerusalem and the Western Wall.

While Jewish pilgrimage dates back to the United Monarchy, clear evidence of Christian pilgrimage to the region of Palestine only dates back to the fourth century CE. According to Charles Freeman, "the cave of the Nativity and the manger itself were on show in Bethlehem by 320."[46] The most prominent early pilgrim was Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine I. She traveled throughout Palestine identifying holy sites and collecting relics. She is even credited with discovering the hiding place of the cross on which Jesus was crucified. Though there is no evidence that Helena ever visited Jezreel, other early pilgrims certainly did. The gruesome biblical episode associated with the site has obviously enthralled people with a sense of morbid fascination for centuries. It motivated some of the earliest pilgrims to the Holy Land to visit Jezreel. Travelers as early as the Bordeaux Pilgrim (c. 333 CE) visited Jezreel to see the site of

[36] Charles Freeman, *Holy Bones, Holy Dust: How Relics Shaped the History of Medieval Europe* (Yale University Press, 2011), 24.

Naboth's famous vineyard, and the evil Queen Jezebel's downfall.[47] The concept of pilgrimage became fundamental to medieval Christian religious identity. Undertaking a pilgrimage was not just an act of penance but also a demonstration of true piety.

Sponsoring the pilgrimages of others was an additional way for the elite to demonstrate their piety. For example, Richard II of Normandy funded pilgrims wishing to journey to the Holy Sepulcher. He subsidized a mass pilgrimage directed by Richard of Verdun, abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, in 1026-7.[48] It is highly probable that many pilgrims could never have afforded the trip on their own. However, through the generosity of others, they were able to make their own pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Unfortunately, sources relating the experiences of early pilgrims can be difficult to locate and access. The most accessible primary sources relate almost exclusively to the experience of the Christian social elite of medieval Europe. This has led to the common misconception that pilgrimage to Palestine was an activity undertaken only by wealthy Christians. Many believe that the distance and the expense dissuaded others from undertaking the journey. Yet primary sources suggest that Palestinian pilgrimage was not only a longstanding tradition but also a common practice experienced by individuals from all walks of life, not just the elite. Christian pilgrims who recorded their experiences often refer to traveling in large groups and worshiping among others, while Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela recorded facts about every Jewish community that he came across in his travels.

One of the most valuable accounts of medieval travel, Benjamin of Tudela's itinerary relates the details of his years of travel. Beginning from his home in the Kingdom of Navarre, in

[47] C.W. Wilson, "Introduction," in *Itinerary from Bordeaux to Jerusalem* (London: Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, 1887).
[38] Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage c.700-c.1500* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 17.

modern Spain, he journeyed along the coast of France, through Italy and Greece to Palestine and Persia, across the Arabian Peninsula to Egypt before returning to the Iberian Peninsula in 1173. Though it is uncertain whether the motivation for his trip was religious, commercial, or otherwise the detail with which Benjamin documented his journey, not only the cities and landmarks but also the distances between and often demographic information, with particular attention paid to the size and condition of the Jewish communities he encountered, makes his account particularly useful to scholars specializing in many fields of study, including medieval geography, demography, and, of relevance to this thesis, pilgrimage routes.[49]

While Benjamin of Tudela has little to say about Jezreel it is significant that his is the earliest known textual record that the site was also known as Zer'in.[50]While the two names do not sound particularly similar, the connection can be found in their meaning. Both names are derived from a common Semitic root, zera, meaning seed.[51] Jezreel is derived from the Hebrew "Yizre'el" and is commonly translated as "God sows" or "May God make fruitful," while Zer'in displays Aramaic influence with the presence of the final "n", as does the alternate name for the nearby site of Megiddo, Armageddon.[52] Similar implication can be seen in both names as they emphasize fertility as the characteristic feature of the site and the valley that it overlooks.

Though pilgrims to the site throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages may have been awed by the breathtaking view of the rich valley below, the fertility of the land was certainly not what brought them to the site. The primary draw for Christian pilgrims was the desire to walk in

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[49] Marcus Nathan Adler, "Introduction," in *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, Kindle Edition (New York, NY: Philipp Feldheim, Inc., 2005), loc. 80-211.
[50] Benjamin of Tudela, *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, trans. Marcus Nathan Adler, Kindle Edition (New York, NY: Philipp Feldheim, Inc., 2005), loc. 635.
[51] Walid Khalidi, ed., "Zir'in," in *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992), 339.
[52] Notes on the etymology of site names provided by Dr. Norma Franklin in personal correspondence on April 17, 2021.

the footsteps of Jesus. In the seventh century Leontios of Neapolis wrote, "All we, the faithful, worship the cross of Christ as his staff: his all-holy tomb as his throne and couch: the manger and Bethlehem, and the holy places where he lived as his house."[53] Though there is no textual reference to Jesus ever having set foot in Jezreel, it is quite possible that since his home, Nazareth, lay just across the valley from Jezreel, he may have passed through the city while making annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem with his family during his early life. Surely this thought, coupled with the sites more direct association with other biblical events, has motivated visits from avid pilgrims for centuries.

Because early pilgrim accounts are far from comprehensive histories, it is important to supplement the existent textual sources through study of the physical evidence of pilgrim activity. If one knows what to look for, the archaeological record can reveal much about the amount of pilgrim activity at any designated location. Pilgrimage sites frequently offered souvenirs for sale, either from the site itself or vendors nearby. The pilgrim's guide to Santiago de Compostela includes information on souvenirs sold in the market in front of the church.[54] Mementos of pilgrimage took a variety of forms. Badges, tokens, and purported relics were common throughout Christendom. In Palestine *ampullae,* small flasks or vials often filled with holy water or oil, were a popular form of souvenir. Several sources mention vials of oil and canteens of water from the Jordan River being offered at shrines and collected by eager pilgrims. Though the majority of ampullae that have survived to this day are made of ceramic or metal glass examples do exist. If there was a glass industry located near the church at Jezreel, ampullae may have been one of the variety of items it produced.

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[53] Leontios of Neapolis, "Apology," in *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi, vol. 54 (Paris, 1901), 13:45A, line 1-45B, 3 qtd. in Charles Barber, "The Truth in Painting: Iconoclasm and Identity in Early-Medieval Art," *Speculum* 72, no. 4 (1997): 1031.
Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 35.

Though some ampullae and other pilgrimage souvenirs bore inscriptions linking them to the specific site, saint, or relic with which they were associated many were decorated only with figural representations. Some of the iconography used is still recognizable allowing the artifacts bearing known motifs to be attributed to the sites of their origin. Others remain a mystery. Further study of the specific forms that pilgrimage souvenirs took and the processes by which they were made, in conjuncture with intense survey or excavation of the area surrounding the church at Jezreel would greatly expand modern understanding of the nature and degree of pilgrimage activity at the site.

In 1064 Guenther, bishop of Bamberg, led "the great German pilgrimage." Apparently, his party was rather flashy. They "aroused the interest of robbers by traveling with undue pomp." Fortunately, these pilgrims were saved from the dangers of the road by the lord of Ramleh. After his heroic deed, the local lord insisted that the pilgrims remain in his city. He delayed the pilgrims for no less than two weeks, though they were eager to continue on to Jerusalem. He said that the local authorities needed time to completely rid the area of bandits. Likely, he had realized it was more profitable to welcome these foreigners into his city than to allow them to be robbed on the road and wished to keep them in his city and boosting the local economy as long as possible. No doubt, reports of bandit attacks in the area would have discouraged other groups of pilgrims from traveling through his city.[55]

Pilgrim accounts like those of Margery Kempe demonstrate the complexity of the foreign traveler's relations with the locals, emphasizing the ways in which many locals relied on pilgrim traffic. By the time of Margery's pilgrimage, in the thirteenth century, it had become common practice that newly arrived pilgrims should be required to sleep in caves near the harbor for the

[55] Webb. *Medieval European Pilgrimage.* 20.

first night of their stay in Palestine. During this time, they were bombarded by locals offering to sell them items that would make their overnight stay more comfortable in addition to fresh food and other local commodities.[56] Far from being just a religious activity, pilgrimage was also a journey. Diane Webb aptly states, "As a form of travel, of physical exertion, it required many types of infrastructural support, from the upkeep of roads and bridges to the provision of victuals, accommodation and sometimes, regrettably, burial."[57]

Clearly, pilgrimage was a lucrative business. Not only did pilgrims provide economic stimulus for the religious houses responsible for taking care of the relics and holy sites which attracted them to the Holy Land but also for the cities which they passed through. Several primary sources present evidence of disputes over the production and sale of pilgrimage souvenirs by unauthorized persons. Unfortunately, these sources refer mainly to pilgrimage sites in Spain and Rome. However, souvenirs were still undoubtedly important in Palestine. Pilgrims traveled all the way to Egypt to visit the shrine of Saint Catherine and receive a token of her blessing.[58] Freeman describes the veneration of Saint Catherine of Alexandria as "one of the 'new' cults of medieval Europe." Pilgrimage to this monastery required a three-week trip across the desert. Yet pilgrims still came. In fact, "despite the lack of any evidence for her existence, Catherine was to become one of the most popular of medieval saints, easily recognizable in paintings for her opulent dress and the broken wheel beside her."[59]

Pilgrimage practices in Palestine were not directly parallel to those observed in Rome. The distribution of oil at the tomb of Saint Catherine demonstrates one of the ways that the

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[56] Louise Collis, *Memoirs of a Medieval Woman: The Life and Times of Margery Kempe* (New York, NY: Crowell, 1964), 81–85.
[57] Webb. "Introduction". *Medieval European Pilgrimage*. xiv.
[58] John Mandeville, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (Macmillan, 1997), 40–41.
[59] Freeman, *Holy Bones, Holy Dust*, 97–98.

nature of souvenirs in Palestine and the surrounding regions differed from the pilgrimage badges widely popular in Rome and the east. Pilgrimage accounts also relate the collection of a milky white substance from the "Milk Grotto" of the Virgin Mary, filling *ampullae* with water from the Jordan River, practicing graffiti, and damaging sites like the Holy Sepulcher in order to leave one's mark or collect a piece of the holy sites as a memento of pilgrimage.

Figure 5: The church at Jezreel at the close of excavation, tower in background, 1991. Courtesy of the Jezreel Expedition.

Primary sources demonstrate that pilgrims traveled thorough Jezreel. While there it seems that many participated in the custom of stoning the tomb of Jezebel. This was perhaps a way for passersby to demonstrate their disdain for the biblical figure and to participate vicariously in her downfall and defeat. However, it is possible that there may have been another factor drawing them to the site as well. Jacob Wood theorizes that Jezreel may have been the seat of a fabricated saint's cult, the cult of St. Varus. According to Patrick J. Geary, "Beginning in the middle of the eighth century…Roman martyrs' remains, with or without the consent of the pope, began to find their way north. Sacred places could now be created by the transfer of holy men of the past to new sites with which they had never before been associated, in life or in death." Geary continues on to describe the phenomenon of the translation of "seed relics" that developed at this time as a

conscious strategy intended to Christianize pagan holy sites.[60] He also discusses the relic trade which became prominent in the eighth century at great length and includes details on the often-unethical practices of relic traders and their clientele.[61] Given the questionable ethics and economic potential involved in saints' cults and the associated relics trade it should not be surprising to discover the fact that there was also a trend of manufacturing fictitious saints in order to create local saint cults.

In the article "Varus of Egypt: A fictional military Martyr," David Woods elaborates on the apparently common practice of the creation and veneration of false saints.[62] Woods' article on Saint Varus presents several intriguing parallels to the story and situation of Saint Catherine. Like Catherine, Varus was an early Roman martyr, executed for his faith and posthumously transported to a location with Biblical associations where a shrine and later a church were built in his honor. After his execution, Varus' remains were claimed by a woman who transported them to her hometown near Mt. Tabor and built a shrine to the valiant soldier there. Woods theorizes that while the two primary sources recounting the story of Varus give different names for the village to which the relics were translated both these names, Sura (Σύρη) and Edra (Έδρα), can be seen as bastardizations of Esdraelon (Έσδραηλά), the Greek derivative of Jezreel.[63]

Like the mountain backdrop of the monastery of Saint Catharine, Jezreel held biblical affiliation. However, most of the biblical events that took place at Jezreel were negative ones. Woods concludes due to various historic inconsistencies and anachronisms is most likely a fiction which does not predate the 5th century. He theorizes that the tale of Varus may have been

[60] Patrick J. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Cornell University Press, 1994), 167–68.
[61] Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages*, 188–93.
[62] David Woods, "Varus of Egypt: A Fictitious Military Martyr," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 20, no. 1 (1996): 191–98.
[63] Woods, "Varus of Egypt," 176–77, 187–90.

fabricated to explain the presence of certain burials in and around the church of Jezreel, after their true origins had been forgotten by later generations.[64] It is also possible that the citizens of Jezreel hoped to give their city a more positive connection to Christianity and the relic trade by creating the cult of Saint Varus but found themselves unable to escape Jezebel's shadow. The cult of Saint Varus does not seem to have ever attracted a wide base of devotees in Palestine.

While Jezreel is mentioned in several medieval pilgrimage accounts, there are no known references to a church or shrine dedicated to St. Varus being located there. This might be accounted for by an article Woods briefly references which theorizes, based on a medieval mosaic inscription from Casale Monferrato, that the Knights Templar transported the relics of St. Varus from Jezreel to Italy while the site was under their control during the Crusades. Regardless of the origins of the cult of Saint Varus, Jezreel's presence within the narratives of pilgrim itineraries assures us that the site was known to and visited by them. When these accounts connect the site to any specific figure or narrative the overwhelming majority of these references are to Naboth and Jezebel. In 1137 Peter the Deacon reported that "the tomb of Jezebel is stoned by everyone to this very day."[65]

Jezreel occupies a central location within a day's travel of important economic and pilgrimage centers like Caesarea, Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee. This geographic situation would have made Jezreel an ideal site for a pilgrim waystation. After all, "for many shrines of the second or lower ranks, a position on or near a major route was crucial."[66] However, its location also made it an important location militarily, and no secondary pilgrimage site could

[64] Woods, "Varus of Egypt," 198.
[65] Petrus Diaconus, "De Locis Sanctis," in *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, vol. 5, n.d., CLXXV, 99. qtd. in Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A-K*, vol. 1 (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 277.
[66] Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 121.

remain successful when located in an active war zone. Only sites with a direct connection to Jesus continued to draw Christian pilgrims throughout the crusades despite constant threats of hostilities. Secondary sites and way stations like Jezreel were threatened both militarily and economically by the crusades. Cities and villages were sometimes completely abandoned in the face of these threats. Some were rebuilt; others never recovered.

Analysis of the primary sources reveals irrefutable evidence that pilgrims were instrumental in maintaining positive economic growth in Palestine. Benjamin of Tudela's account mentions that at the time of his visit, c. 1173, one Jewish dyer lived in Jezreel.[67] Of all of the cities included in his itinerary he only records the presence of Jewish dyers in eight of them. Among these eight cities are Jaffa, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem, all of which were successful trade centers. By grouping Jezreel with these cities, Benjamin of Tudela demonstrates that Jezreel may have been a more important economic center in the 12th century than modern historians are currently inclined to believe.

Studies of medieval pilgrimage activities and the pilgrim economy have gained interest and advanced greatly with the last twenty years. Unfortunately, many studies of pilgrimage activity in Palestine during the Crusades are based solely on textual accounts of Christian pilgrimage or biased heavily in that direction. The topics of Jewish and Muslim pilgrimage rarely receive the same level of attention outside their respective fields of religious and cultural studies. Even the small survey of pilgrimage activity included in this thesis displays a regrettable bias toward favoring information on Christian pilgrimage due to the author's familiarity with and access to primarily Christian sources. A single comprehensive source delineating the variety of pilgrimage activities undertaken by members of the three major religions present in Palestine

[67] Benjamin of Tudela, *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, loc. 631.

during the Crusades would be instrumental in coming to fully understand the economic and political influences that pilgrims and the institution of pilgrimage exerted over the crusades. An archaeological investigation of Jezreel's church, crusader tower, and surrounding area could provide important information about the full extent of pilgrim activity at Jezreel specifically and in Palestine more generally.

The Knights Templar and the Military Heritage of Jezreel

In addition to the potential to provide information about historic pilgrimage activity at Jezreel, excavation of the tower remains and the area immediately surrounding them would certainly provide valuable information on the scope of the military presence and activity at Jezreel during the Crusades and possibly earlier as well. Textual sources indicate that Jezreel was under the control of the Knights Templar in the twelfth century. At that time, it was called Le Petit Gérin or Parvum Gerinum by the Crusaders and seems to have remained a popular site with pilgrims. Multiple sources from the period mention that there was a tomb or monument associated with Jezebel on the site.[68] Peter the Deacon reported that, "In Jezreel…the tomb of Jezebel is stoned by everyone to this very day."[69].

Abu Shama implies that the site was fortified, possibly by the Templars, by listing it alongside other fortified sites, describing them as, "towns which one would not have dreamed of approaching in the past, prosperous places which one could not hope to reach and from which one would even look away, for example. Beīsan, Kerferbela, Zer'aîn, Djinin, all famous cities, surrounded by flourishing villages, shady gardens, navigable rivers, high fortresses, powerful walls within which their palaces were housed."[70] The Knights Templar were established in 1118, "that, as far as their strength permitted, they should keep the roads and highways safe from the menace of robbers and highwaymen, with especial regard for the protection of pilgrims."[71] Sources verify that the Knights Templar maintained a presence at Jezreel. Given its strategic military position, overlooking the narrowest point of the Jezreel Valley and thereby offering easy

[68] Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1990-1991," 5.
[69] Petrus Diaconus, "De Locis Sanctis"; Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A-K*, 1:277.
[70] Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres, *Recueil Des Historiens Des Croisades: Historiens Orientaux*, vol. VI (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1872), 246.
[71] William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. Emily Atwater Babcock and A.C. Krey, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1943), 525.

control of the two main regional thoroughfares, it would have been practical for the Templars to have fortified the site, perhaps extending or reinforcing preexisting fortifications. However, the exact extent and details of any fortress or defenses which may have stood at Jezreel during the Crusades are currently uncertain as no records of their construction or detailed descriptions of them are known to exist.[72] Yet, the Templars were obviously not the only ones to recognize the strategic importance of the site. It was attacked by Salah ad-Din in 1183 and 1184 before finally being captured by his nephew in 1187. Unfortunately, time has not been kind to the medieval architecture of Jezreel. Nothing remains above the surface but the ruins of the tower and the church. Any fortifications which were present during the Templar occupation are long gone and the location of the "tomb of Jezebel," possibly the largest draw for medieval pilgrims, is now completely lost to modern visitors and scholars alike.

Today, little of the tower remains visible and there is no documentary evidence of its initial extent. It may have been little more than a watch tower, or it may have resembled the 13th-century fortress of Pilgrim Castle, which the Knights Templar built south of Haifa. With a moat and a double wall protecting three great halls and a church. Pilgrim Castle was said to be equipped to maintain 4,000 soldiers, "to protect the road, and also the vines, orchards and cultivated fields in the locality that were vulnerable to Muslim raids."[73] However, perhaps it is reasonable to assume that whatever fortification was present at Jezreel was not as extensive, given that it ultimately failed its purpose. From 1183 to 1187 Jezreel was raided by Muslim

[72] Jennie Ebeling, "Gone to the Dogs: Zer 'in Through Western Eyes," in *The Woman in the Pith Helmet: A Tribute to Archaeologist Norma Franklin*, ed. Jennie Ebeling and Philippe Guillaume (Lockwood Press, 2020), 37; Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1990-1991," 5–6.
[73] Piers Paul Read, *The Templars* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 167.

forces at least three times before the defenders were finally completely overcome. By 1283 Jezreel had become nothing more than a village of about thirty households.[74]

Though the extent of the Templar compound at Jezreel is uncertain, it can be inferred that the reason for the Templar presence was a combination of its militarily strategic significance as a site overlooking the Jezreel Valley and the security which having an established presence there offered to pilgrims whom, sources tell us, customarily "stoned the tomb of Jezebel." However, the Templars were not the first to utilize the site for military purposes, nor were they the last. The Jezreel Valley has been the site of many major battles throughout history. Considering that it is the largest expanse of level ground in the area, this should hardly be surprising. And given Jezreel's location overlooking the valley it is likewise understandable that the site and those who occupied it were often involved in and affected by these battles.

Jezreel's military status dates back at least to the Iron Age. The site's connection to the battles recounted in the biblical narrative of the reigns of Ahab and Jehu has already been mentioned. Nevertheless, it should also be elaborated that, while older traditions of biblical scholarship translate and interpret Jezreel only as the location of "Ahab's palace,"[75] current scholarship recognizes the military nature of the site and its strategic importance as something of a garrison city or rallying point guarding the border of the kingdom of Israel and the road to the capitol at Samaria.[76]

There are few known written records of Jezreel for the period between the biblical narrative of events in the 9th century BCE and the accounts of the Battle of Hattin and Nura al-

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[74] Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A-K*, 1:277.
[75] Williamson, "Jezreel in the Biblical Texts," 76–89.
[76] Shawn Zelig Aster, "The Function of the City of Jezreel and the Symbolism of Jezreel in Hosea 1–2," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 71, no. 1 (2012): 31–46.; Franklin, "Jezreel: A Military City and the Location of Jehu's Coup"; Nadav Na'aman, "Naboth's Vineyard and the Foundation of Jezreel," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33, no. 2 (December 1, 2008): 197–218.

Din's conquest of the site in the 12th century CE. The records that do exist are little more than brief mentions by pilgrims recounting the site's biblical association and geographic situation. However, the archaeological record appears to indicate constant occupation even preceding the Iron Age and extending into modern times. A pronounced increase in the volume of ceramic finds as well as numerous wine and oil production instillations and various imported wares dating to the Roman/Byzantine period seem to attest to not just occupation but also a certain level of prosperity that would justify Eusebius' description of Jezreel as a very great or large village at that time.

Unfortunately, after being constantly harassed by conflict at the end of the 12th century, Jezreel seems to have never been able to reclaim the same level of prosperity. In the 13th century Burchard of Mount Sion said that the village contained only 20-30 houses. Ottoman census records attest that the village remained quite small, fewer than 200 homes, through the 16th and 17th centuries.[77] The site's diminished size could be attributed to the fact that it no longer marked and overlooked a border that needed protecting. Without an incentive to maintain a garrison on the site the economic activities and overall settlement size also decreased.

[77] Khalidi, "All That Remains," 340.

The Village of Zer'in and a New Wave of Pilgrimage

Figure 6: Photo of Zer'in by H. Phillips, c.1866. Courtesy of the Jezreel Expedition.

Regardless of the site's diminished population and military significance, it continued to draw in travelers in the nineteenth century. Although, by that time the site that Eusebius had once referred to as a "very great village"[78] was described as "a miserable little village"[79] with few inhabitants[80] it was once again a common stop on tours and pilgrimages through Palestine. This new age of pilgrimage was more akin to the "Grand Tour" of Europe than to the medieval form of pilgrimage, though the primary routes did remain the same. The experience was well documented by many of the elite individuals who took part in it. For example, in 1867 the *Quaker City* set off on "The Grand Holy Land Pleasure Excursion." Samuel Clemens, better known by his pen name Mark Twain, was among its passengers and he memorialized the details of the trip in his work, *The Innocents Abroad*. Jezreel was one of the stops on the pilgrim's

[78] Eusebius of Caesarea, *Onomasticon*.
[79] C. B. Elliott, *Travels in the Three Great Empires of Austria, Russia, and Turkey*, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1838), 379.
[80] Edward Robinson and Eli Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea*, vol. 3 (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1841), 166.

itinerary.[81] Located in the modern State of Israel, Jezreel was a part of the Ottoman Empire at the time of the excursion. At the time an Arab village, Zer'in, as it was known to locals and Ottoman authorities, occupied the site and served as a regular stop for Westerners touring the Holy Land and had been so for hundreds of years.[82]

Near the end of his narrative Twain writes, "Presently we came to a ruinous old town on a hill, the same being the ancient Jezreel."[83] Though Twain was perhaps the most famous pilgrim to record his arrival in and unfavorable impression of the town, he was not the first nor was he the last. In the nineteenth century, when these travelers accounts were commonly produced, there were no standing architectural remains dating to the Iron Age or even to the Roman occupation of the site. The only visible building not of modern construction was the tower at the center of the village. Possibly of medieval origin, by the time of Twain's visit the remains of the structure had been converted into a large house which also served as an inn. The lack of ancient architectural ruins to associate with the biblical story of Jezreel and the downfall of the House of Ahab may have disappointed visitors. This disappointment may have, in turn, prompted their descriptions of the site to be more critical than they otherwise might have been. Alternately, the severe criticism might have been colored by the emotions evoked by the biblical narrative itself. The main actress was, after all, an idolatress and murderess who was cursed by the prophet Elijah. Some visitors even seemed to believe that the curse carried beyond Jezebel and her husband, Ahab, and extended to Jezreel, the site of Jezebel's gruesome death, as well.[84]

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[81] Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (Project Gutenberg, 2006).
[82] Ebeling, "Gone to the Dogs," 36–38; Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1990-1991," 5–6. Ebeling, "Gone to the Dogs," 36–38; Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1990-1991," 5–6.
[83] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*.
[84] Ebeling, "Gone to the Dogs," 43–51.

Dr. Jennie Ebeling has written a very informative essay on the way in which westerners experienced and interpreted their encounters with the site.[85] Though the accounts vary widely regarding the number of houses and families in the village, all of the descriptions cast the settlement in a very negative light. Despite the obvious distaste that western pilgrims expressed for the village of Jezreel, it seems that they may not have been able to avoid stopping there even if they had wanted to. According to American photojournalist Edward Wilson, "In Palestine [the foreign traveler] may choose his route but not his resting place. His conductors have their 'stations,' where it is the custom to stop for the night, and they do not willingly change."[86] The village of Jezreel/Zer'in was one of these stopping places.

[85] Ebeling, "Gone to the Dogs."
[86] Edward L. Wilson, "Some Wayside Places in Palestine," *Century Magazine* 39, no. 5 (1890): 741.

The Tower of Jezreel

Figure 7: Photochrom print of the tower of Jezreel, c.1890.[87]

At the center of the village of Zer'in there was, "a square tower of some antiquity, now used as a *Medafeh*, or 'Inn.'"[88] Some travelers even paid to climb the tower to view the valley from the highest vantage point.[89] Though the village apparently looked ruinous by western standards it must have been at least somewhat successful in order to frequently offer hospitality to travelers and their guides.

In fact, according to records from the British Mandate the village controlled 23,920 dunums of land. The majority of the land, 94%, was agricultural. But the village was large

[87] *The ruins, Jezreel, Holy Land, i.e., Israel*, c. 1890, Library of Congress -Views of the Holy Land Collection https://www.loc.gov/item/2001699268/.
[88] Josias Leslie Porter, *A Handbook for Travellers in Syria and Palestine*, Murray's Handbooks for Travellers (London: John Murray, 1858), 337.
[89] John Wilson, *The Lands of the Bible Visited and Described* (Ediburgh: William Whyte and Co., 1847), 87.

enough to maintain a mosque, a marketplace, and a school founded by the Ottoman authorities.[90] Additionally, though western travelers describe the village and the tower in negative terms, their words are often accompanied by images that romanticize the tower of Jezreel. Some even speculate that the tower from which Jezebel was thrown could have stood on that exact spot before the current structure replaced it.[91]

The date and purpose of the tower's original construction are currently unknown. Though it is commonly referred to as "the crusader tower" by locals and scholars alike the title is largely due to popular perception rather than historic fact. The tower does clearly contain features characteristic of crusader architecture. However, no written records of the tower's initial construction have yet been discovered. It is possible that the tower ruins visible today may have been a crusader period extension or repurposing of a structure predating the crusader occupation of the site.

In his *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem* Pringle hypothesizes that the last phase of the tower was of Ottoman construction which had incorporated the remains of an older Crusader structure. Pringle's treatment of the tower is the most thorough of any scholar reporting on its history. However, he does not even attempt to speculate as to the oldest phase of construction which the tower might contain, stating simply "the village is now deserted and ruinous, and it is hard to make out the plans of buildings at all clearly."[92] The presence of internal stairs, often a sign of crusader architecture, and the proximity to the church would seem to securely date the visible remains of the tower to the crusader period. Still, the lack of primary sources related to the construction of the tower and its function prior to the nineteenth century

[90] Khalidi, "All That Remains," 339.
[91] Ebeling, "Gone to the Dogs"; Elliott, *Travels in the Three Great Empires of Austria, Russia, and Turkey*; Wilson, "Some Wayside Places in Palestine"; Porter, *A Handbook for Travellers in Syria and Palestine*.
[92] Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A-K*, 1:277.

make it difficult for scholars to learn much of the tower's history by consulting textual sources alone. The foundation of the structure is not currently visible, making it impossible to rule out the possibility that the crusader period tower may have been built on the site or foundations of an even older structure.

Though Ussishkin and Woodhead claim to have found the location of "Ahab's palace" on the eastern end of the tel, nowhere near the tower,[93] it is quite possible that the Iron Age occupation of the site was farther reaching than is currently recognized and that the crusader tower was built on the foundations of a much older structure, possibly even dating as far back as the Iron Age and the biblical associations of the site. This would conform to the cycles of use and reuse that characterize the majority of the architectural remains that have been uncovered not just at Jezreel but across all of modern Israel.[94] At the very least, sources imply that a Crusader structure was present where the ruins of the tower now stand. This structure may have been related to the monument of Jezebel reported by pilgrims, or the fortifications mentioned by Abu Shama.[95] More research is necessary in order to understand the chronology of the tower and the evolving role that it played within the history of Jezreel.

[93] Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1990-1991."
[94] Jennie Ebeling and Norma Franklin, "The Bible and Interpretation - Preliminary Report of the 2013 Jezreel Expedition Field Season," The Bible and Interpretation, 2013, http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/2013/08/fra378012.shtml; Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1990-1991."
[95] Ebeling, "Gone to the Dogs," 37.

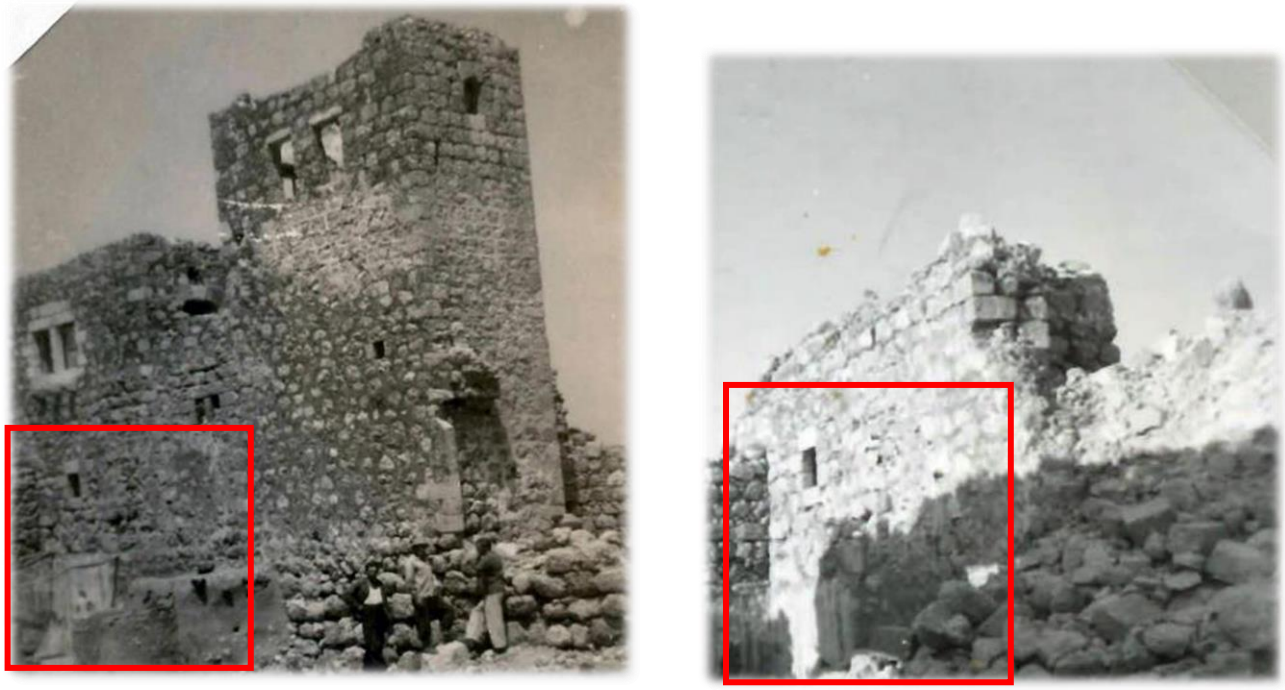

Figure 8: Tower of Jezreel, comparison of the structure before and after bombardment by heavy artillery in August 1948.[96]

1948: Assault and Aftermath

At present, little is truly known about the tower beyond its use as a central dwelling and occasional inn from the 19th century until its destruction in 1948, and of course the cause and date of its modern collapse. The tower stood at the center of the modern Arab village until 1948. However, the structure clearly predated the village itself and it is quite likely that the village formed organically around the conveniently located and salvageable architectural remains. In 1948, when Mandatory Palestine was dissolved and Israel declared its independence, Jezreel/Zer'in become a base for Arab forces in the conflict that followed. The Arab Liberation Army (ALA), recognizing the site's strategic military position controlling a major highway to Jerusalem, took control of the village, evacuating the residents to a nearby village by bus. Jezreel/Zer'in was captured by Israeli forces on May 28th. The ALA made attempts to take back

[96] Photos from the IAA Archives. Courtesy of the Jezreel Expedition.

the site, employing heavy artillery between June and August. Though the village remained under Israeli control the ALA assault caused massive amounts of damage.

These events had tragic consequences for the village's residents as well as its architecture. Many of the villagers sought refuge in Jordan. A few settled permanently in nearby villages and cities. However, it seems that no desire or attempt to reestablish the village was made, Zer'in was permanently depopulated. Therefore, Palmach soldiers who were sent to the area while "on leave" after months of fighting settled in the abandoned village. After being left to their own devices for about two years, the soldiers petitioned for the right to established Kibbutz Yizre'el on the site.

Figure 9: Abandoned house at Zer'in being used as a stable by the newly formed kibbutz[97]

[97] *Members of Kibbutz Jezreel Taking Work Horses out of the Stable*, Kluger Zoltan, 1949. National Photo Collection of Israel, item #D832-083.

They were given permission with the condition that they move their settlement to the west of the village ruins. At that point, the abandoned houses were deemed a security risk due to their proximity to the contemporaneous Jordanian border. Therefore, in 1967 a brief archaeological survey was conducted by the Department of Antiquities before the village was demolished by the government to ensure that the abandoned houses were not used as cover or a base for border raider or military insurgents.[98] Though the tower and nearby church were spared from complete destruction at that time, they had not escaped the turmoil of the previous years unscathed. The tower that had stood at the center of the Arab village for at least a century and likely far longer had been severely damaged in the fighting. Today, all that remains of the structure is a single arched doorway and a handful of stunted walls surrounded by the precarious stone slopes formed by the tower's collapse.

The sad state of the once picturesque tower at Jezreel is made all the more tragic by the fact that efforts have not been and are not being made to further study this section of the site. This is largely because initiating excavation of the structure would make the excavating institution or organization legally responsible for the structures conservation, a responsibility that has heretofore been deemed cost prohibitive when viewed in the light of preconceptions of the tower's crusader origins and lack of interest due to this apparent lack of greater antiquity or connection to the biblical narrative of the site, but no effort is made to control access and damage to the ruins, or even to protect the public from the dangers that the ruins themselves have come to pose to visitors of the site.

[98] Ussishkin and Woodhead, "Excavations at Tel Jezreel 1990-1991," 8–9. Additional information about the fighting which took place at Zer'in and the establishment of Kibbutz Yizre'el was provided by Dr. Norma Franklin via personal correspondence and gathered by the author through personal conversations with various members of the kibbutz over the course of seven excavation seasons spent hosted by Kibbutz Yizre'el.

Phase 2: Identifying the Conservation Needs and Opportunities at Jezreel

Conditions on the Ground

Tower doorway, Aug. 1948

Tower corner, Aug. 1948

Tower doorway, 2011

Tower corner, 2016

As can clearly be seen by comparing any images of the tower at Jezreel before and after 1948, the structure was very badly damaged by the mortar fire which ALA forces rained down on the Hagenah in their attempts to retake the village. Additionally, although the site, which belongs to/is administered by the Keren Kayementh LeIsrael - Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF), and is technically "protected" under Israeli law, the law only requires that the Israel Antiquities Authority ensures that the "antiquities" are not damaged. The law does not require or even make provision for conservation or maintenance efforts. However, photographic comparison

reveals that the condition of the tower has deteriorated dramatically in the years since 1948 due to the gross negligence that has been shown it. Therefore, by failing to properly restrict access to and destructive activities at the site the responsible parties have in fact allowed damage to be done to the architecture.[99]

Despite the fact that the tower now stands in ruins, visitors to the site still climb to the proverbial "top", just as they did in the nineteenth century and likely for centuries before as well. Now, however, the top is not the roof of a watchtower or a village home but merely the highest point on the mound of ruins and rubble created by the bombardment and destruction of Zer'in. And rather than religious pilgrims, modern visitors to the site are primarily local families and school children. Their goal in climbing the tower is not likely to be gaining an unobstructed view of the valley but rather to have their picture taken beneath the visible arch or to claim victory in a race against their friends, completely ignorant of the fact that they are treading on the ruins of hundreds of years of life and culture. These children are doubtless further ignorant, or perhaps merely negligent, of the fact that the ruins pose as much of a threat to them as they pose to the ruins. As has been previously mentioned, the walls are surrounded by piles of loose stones and the ground is often obscured by dense, tall grass. Additionally, the excavation led by Ussishkin and Woodhead in the 90s did dig in the vicinity of the tower. The majority of their work on this part of the tel focused directly on the church and an associated medieval cemetery.

After excavation, some of the area was fenced off to prevents access or falls into the open trenches. However, over time the fences became unstable, the edges of the excavated squares began to erode, and both have now fallen away in many places. In other parts of the area, no

[99] 1948 photographs from the IAA Archives; Photo of tower doorway, 2011, by Dr. Norma Franklin; Photo of tower corner, 2016, by Martha Hellander, all courtesy of the Jezreel Expedition. It should be noted, these photos are not direct parallels. They were not taken for the purpose of recreating the exact focus, angle, and distance, but are as close as the author can come to that goal without returning to the site, currently impossible due to travel restrictions.

fencing or backfilling was even attempted. There is currently a deep pit in the ruins of the nave of the church. Likely because fencing could not have been put around it without damaging the architecture. Why the hazard was not mitigated by backfilling, on the other hand, is less clear. This negligence has led to a very dangerous situation in which a site that frequently attracts visitors of all kinds is littered with rubble and open pits. Moreover, the view of these hazards is seasonally obstructed nearly completely due to the area being wildly overgrown. Clearly the site's current condition is a very serious risk to public safety.

Figure 10: Jezreel Expedition members observing the open trenches left near the tower and church in the 90s[100]

Regardless of the dangerous conditions, locals that know or hear of the ruins are curious and visitors and hikers commonly make the trek to see the remnants of the crusader tower and church. Some of the residents of Kibbutz Yizre'el have developed a distinct connection to and sense of pride in the site. They have even attempted to establish a stone lined walking path past the church and tower ruins. While the path remains relatively well-defined attempts to beautify it by lining it with stones have had little lasting effect as the loose stones are constantly kicked

[100] Photo by Martha Hellander, 2016, provided courtesy of the Jezreel Expedition.

away by children, hikers, and the cattle that roam and graze across the site. And the church itself remains hazardous due to the pits and debris in the area.

Figure 11: Apse of the Crusader era church, 2011, by Dr. Norma Franklin, courtesy of the Jezreel Expedition.

The degree to which the kibbutzniks feel connected to the site and the values that they see in it are currently indistinct and irregular as they have been formed only on a personal level. If the assistance of the kibbutz community is sought on a greater scale than their previous involvement in hosting excavation teams, it would be advisable to seek a better understanding of local attitudes toward the site in order to facilitate the development of programs to best serve the communities interests. This might be achieved through personal interviews or the distribution of a survey. It would be particularly useful to focus on the development of programing for educating the local children on the site's history and importance.

At the close of every academic year elementary school classes take field trips to the spring of Jezreel. Children and teachers are ferried to Jezreel by bus, dropped off in the parking lot at the top of the tel and led on a hike across the site and down to the spring where they spend

the day wading, playing, and generally celebrating the end of another school year. This annual school visit presents the perfect opportunity to introduce local children to the history and importance of the site. However, in order for the site's heritage to be presented to visitors in any kind of official or organized manner, it must first be made safe for visitors. The overgrown vegetation and loose stones presenting a tripping hazard must be cleared away and open pits and trenches must be backfilled, fenced, or secured in some other manner. Additionally, the stability of the walls must be ensured. After this is completed, educational signage can be installed along the hiking trail and around the ruins.

Complications in Cultural Heritage

The term "cultural heritage" encompasses the historical importance, natural environment and traditional cultural identity associated with a given site. Archaeological and historic sites can be developed as cultural heritage sites, where only select pieces of the past are chosen to be presented to the public for various reasons. The conditions of the present can give cultural heritage new meaning, making it relevant to modern ideas and events. [101] However, this can be a double-edged sword as new interpretations of heritage sites may be used for political or ideological agendas which, intentional or not, can be harmful to certain peoples. This is always a major ethical concern when planning for heritage site development. Therefore, it is vital to ensure that all aspects of a site are equally and accurately represented.

In Israel, biblical archaeology and pilgrimage/religious tourism have dominated the heritage industry since Empress Helena's search for the true cross. According to Hemo and Linn, "Tourism in cultural heritage sites is a major force of social, economic, and cultural change and its role will probably continue to increase in the future." While this may pose many challenges to heritage conservation, it also presents opportunities for heritage sites to make valuable contributions to or even spearhead efforts for social change. Therefore, it is all the more necessary to develop strategies to ensure that tourism and site development will not negatively impact the integrity and conservation of heritage sites.[102]Modern scholars and cultural heritage professionals must be cautious not to let political or ideological concerns or agendas dictate their plans for site interpretation and development.

[101] Hemo and Linn, "Sustainable Conservation," 412.
[102] Hemo and Linn, "Sustainable Conservation," 412–13.

Cultural heritage sites serve many different audiences: the local community, schoolchildren, professional researchers, and tourists. Groups often value the site for different reasons. For example, while tourists and schoolchildren may visit heritage sites to learn about the history and culture of the place, others may visit due to their direct or perceived connection to their own preexisting understanding of the site's history and culture. Sometimes, different groups may value the site for differing cultural presences and periods of occupation. This can make it difficult to curate the site attractively for all stakeholders, and cause tension during the development process due to conflicting views on the sites values and appropriate management. Jezreel is most known and most widely valued for its biblical associations. However, it would be remiss of development personnel to prioritize or interpret only the Iron Age occupation of the site and ignore all other periods of occupation due to a perception that the public was only interested in the site's biblical history.

Jezreel's continued importance has been amply demonstrated through both the written and archaeological records. Yet there is still much about the site and its various stages of occupation that is unknown. As has been mentioned previously, an archaeological investigation of the tower and its vicinity could provide significant information about these unknown factors. However, initiating an excavation in the area could delay, complicate, or even negate any development plans for that same area. It will therefore be necessary to determine whether development and/or public access and active excavation can take place simultaneously and if not, which should take precedence.

Proposed Plan of Research, Conservation, and Development

Given the precarious structural condition of the tower and the danger it poses to visitors it is imperative that steps be taken to make the site safe for the public. It could be argued that the simplest and most cost-effective course of action would be to demolish the standing architecture and level the surface, thereby eliminating the danger. However, in doing so a historic structure with the potential to significantly expand the knowledge of the history of the site of Jezreel would be completely destroyed. Which is why the destruction of the tower is, as previously mentioned, forbidden by Israeli law. Unfortunately, though the destruction of the tower is illegal despite the public hazard it poses, public funds are not made readily available for its conservation either, condemning the structure to slowly fall further and further into ruins unless some other means of finding the funding and getting the approval for its conservation can be found. Therefore, this thesis proposes a program of conservation and research which will facilitate further study of the site's history and the role that the tower played within it while simultaneously preparing the site to be developed for a safe, educational, and enjoyable experience for visitors.

No proper plan or record of the dimensions and orientation of the tower ruin has been made since it was surveyed in 1967, and the condition of the architecture seems to have declined greatly since then. The first step that must be taken is to clear the area of all the superfluous vegetation obstructing the access and view of the features. Once the grasses are out of the way, the current condition of the site should be thoroughly documented including dimensions, elevations, gps points and photographs of all visible features in the area, including walls, pits etc.

After that is complete, it will likely be necessary to confer with all stakeholders to determine the best course of action. It would be highly recommended that a conservation architect be consulted to assess the stability of the tower ruin and determine if removing the rubble heaped around the base of the walls posses significant danger of collapse. Following the conservation architect's recommendations, the debris should be removed in the safest and most cost-effective manner without compromising the stability of the ruins.

Though the presence of and need for removing this debris may seem like a great inconvenience, from an archaeological standpoint, it is actually an incredible opportunity. It has already been mentioned that the excavation in the 90s opened trenches in several places across the tel. The full results of these excavations were never published but in their first preliminary report the directors noted that many areas were disturbed by the preparations for laying the foundations of the planned museum. Additionally, many of the excavators' own trenches were not properly backfilled and it is unclear if their dumpsites were ever documented. This means that any subsequent excavations on the site run the risk of being contaminated or complicated by material from the 90s excavation. However, it can be certain that the area between the church and tower has been sealed by the rubble from the destruction of the village and remained undisturbed since that time.

This presents the unique potential for excavating an area of undisturbed archaeology which could reveal the exact chronology and antiquity of the construction and use of the tower, and the occupation of the village. Therefore, a test pit should be dug in the area to determine the potential benefit of wider excavation of the tower site. If further excavation is deemed appropriate, this should be completed before site development begins. Additionally, while excavation is underway, public access to the site should be limited and/or monitored as much as

possible as the presence of unauthorized personnel on any active excavation presents a potential risk to the safety of both the individual and the site's integrity.

Once excavation is complete, if it is undertaken at all, the stakeholders should again confer to determine the best course of action for site development. Establishing a fixed aesthetic boundary for the walking path is not recommended unless it is done in a way which ensures it will not be damaging or disturbing archaeological features and data which may be of interest to future study. Recommended actions include conferring with archaeologists and conservation managers to install educational signage and sunshades at intervals along the path and around the ruins. This will facilitate a more educational and enjoyable experience for all visitors, particularly school children, and will likely generate more local interest in the site which may encourage further study and/or development, as dictated by the growing community of stakeholders.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been to outline the historic and cultural significance of the site of Jezreel, Israel, to identify opportunities for further study of the site, and for the development of interpretive strategies. This has been undertaken to provide tangible with the beginnings of an actionable plan for use in approaching stakeholders and potential partners in future efforts to further refine and put into action the research and development proposals outlined herein, all with the end goal of increasing the general public's awareness of the site's historic and cultural significance with an aim to build stronger connections between the site and local community in order to insure that the community becomes and remains involved in advocating for the site and perpetuating a system of ethical and holistic site interpretation and development.

This has been produced to fill the first two steps of the six-step process outlined above. Step three, the identification of stakeholders and solicitation of partnerships in initiating further excavation and site development efforts is, by comparison, quite simple. Stakeholders include the Jezreel Expedition, the residents of Kibbutz Yizre'el, and the Israel Nature and Parks Authority. There are dozens of other potential partners; however, these have the most vested interest and/or governmental authority motivating and enabling them to provide the most authentic and effective interpretations of the site as it currently stands and of any future research that may be undertaken. Therefore, it is the conclusion of this thesis that the stakeholders identified herein should be approached with a proposal for partnership in further study and development of the tower site within greater Jezreel.

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